A brand new magazine! VOL. 07

C-PIA!

C-PIA! MAGAZINE

In this issue!



A SEPIA LENS LOOK AT
「SHUFFLE!」

WHAT ARE YOU READING?
「MARICA」



SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT
「FORTUNE ARTERIAL」

TRANSLATIONS & RELEASES



And More!

C-pia!

This magazine is distributed for free.

Send all feedback, submissions, and business inquiries to
TakafumiSakagami@gmail.com

c-pia.github.io

AnimEigo is one of the oldest distributors of anime within North America, but in 2024 they were acquired by MediaOCD.

Now, the AnimEigo Youtube channel has begun publishing a podcast where the MediaOCD founder interviews other industry folk, to reflect upon the anime industry's overseas beginnings and the journey it's been on in the years since.

That podcast is...

THE ANIME BUSINESS







Pia! 2025 May

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09 What Are You Reading?



Beginning with a review of Marica ~Shinjitsu no Sekai~ for the Sega Saturn.

Then we step back into Winter with Kissing!! ~under the mistletoe~.

Something Special 19 About...



AUGUST are a well established brand, but of all their games, it's Fortune Arterial we find ourselves talking about.

Have you become "human" yet?

23 What's over there!?

In the cursed land of Lodoss six heroes set forth on a grand journey.

How many times has this tale been told?
Where do we even start?



ISSUE INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE SEVENTH ISSUE OF C-PIA!

Let's take a quick look at the contents to get familiar with what this magazine offers.

Every issue will begin with a short introduction alongside the contents and staff introductions.

Then we have 4 main articles to share!

In **What are you Reading?** one of our writers will talk a bit about a VN they've been reading.

This time, we've got two reviews: Marica and Kissing!!

There's something special about every game.

In **Something Special About...** we sit down to examine what makes a game so special.

What's Over There!?

We glimpse into the history of neighbouring industries to see what they were like.

Finally, a short stroll through memories of old.

Read **A Sepia Lens Look At** the classics which impacted our lives the most.

Looking for fanart, promotions, reader submissions and more!


Introducing the staff!
This issue is brought to you by:
Takafumi Sakagami
I've had a very busy year!
Favourite VN: Tomoyo After ~It's a Wonderful Life~
Favourite character: Tomoko Fujinami (Canvas2)
My first Visual Novel was Shuffle!. The anime adaptation chose the wrong girl!
Then planetarian, and the TLs for Kanon and F/SN dropped just in time to keep me reading. I was an addict from then on.
c-pia.github.io



The 2015 remake of the third **Rance** game is now available in English via MangaGamer! One day you Alicesoft fans will get a break from new releases.

Also, an after story sequel to **11Eyes**, focusing on Misuzu, was suddenly announced and released! Where'd that come from!?

Tayutama arrives on Switch and PC in English, Chinese and even Japanese.

Yosuga no Sora and **Haruka na Sora** have a Chinese Steam release on the way. Save 'em for Summer and you'll have a great time.

You can finally complete your classic Key collection on Steam, because **AIR** has launched in English!









Check our sources!
c-pia.github.io

BREAKING NEWS

Steam-Heart's & Advanced Variable Geo: 29th May.

An HD remaster of **Recettear** has been announced. This new version appears to have some new content as well, so give their twitter account a follow if you're interested in seeing more.

Steam pages for **Farland Saga I&II** have appeared! ...Only in Japanese though.

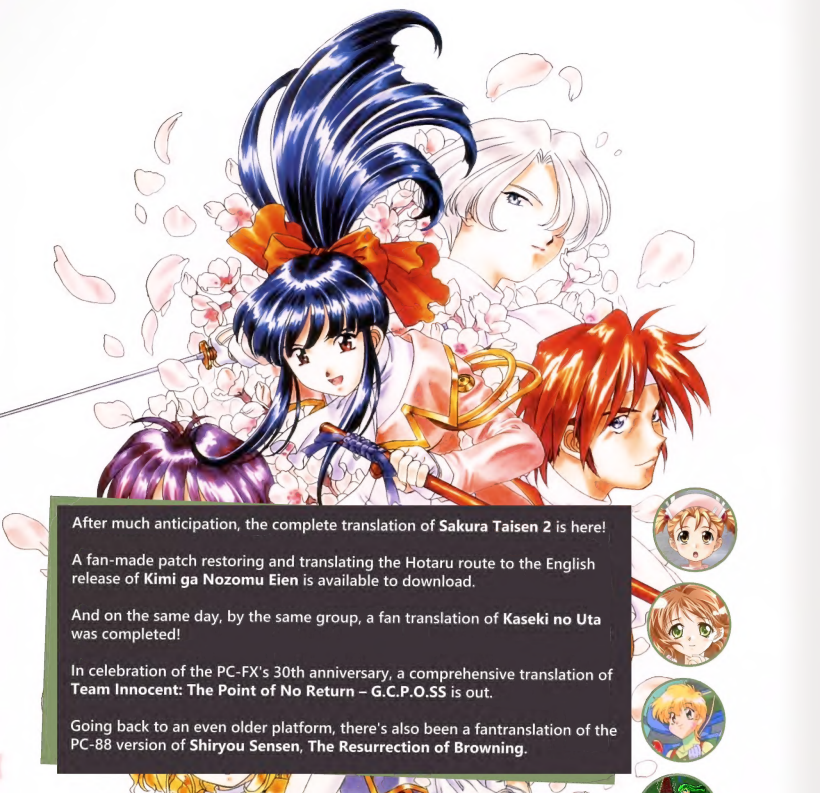
Retro gaming brand BEEP has begun their Bishoujoge Repro Project, aimed at reproducing old games about pretty girls.
The first two titles, **Kurutta Kajitsu** and **Metal Orange EX**, are available for both X68000 and Windows.

As nice as it was to have **Amagami** for the PS2 and PSP translated into English, the experience was hampered by harsh technical limitations.
Well those problems are no more, thanks to a PSVita port of the translation!
Still no mahjong translation, sadly.

The Keitai Wiki guys have once again preserved an old mobile game, and this time it's **Xenosaga: Pied Piper**. A translation is already in the works.



- New PV for the Da Capo Remake 'D.C. Re:tune' -



After much anticipation, the complete translation of **Sakura Taisen 2** is here!

A fan-made patch restoring and translating the Hotaru route to the English release of **Kimi ga Nozomu Eien** is available to download.

And on the same day, by the same group, a fan translation of **Kaseki no Uta** was completed!

In celebration of the PC-FX's 30th anniversary, a comprehensive translation of **Team Innocent: The Point of No Return – G.C.P.O.SS** is out.

Going back to an even older platform, there's also been a fantranslation of the PC-88 version of **Shiryou Sensen, The Resurrection of Browning**.



BREAKING NEWS

- The Puyo Puyo DA! fan translation is complete! - A

Over on the PC-98, an RPG by the **Farland Story** developers named **Appareden -Fukuryuu no Shou-** has also been translated into English.

You can now also play **Prisoner** for the PSX in English too. Largely an RPG, it blends in adventure game elements for conversations, making it text-heavy.

The N64 **Super Real Mahjong** entry has been translated into English by fans. It's much the same as every other game in the franchise, so if you're looking to give the franchise a chance, here's a great place to start.

An english translation for **Metal Slader Glory**'s SFC and SNES releases has been made.
If you have experience with the previous Famicom translation, this is an entirely different script. I recommend this version over that one, if only for the better audio quality.









"If, in 20 years, this world still exists,
then let me know...

What kind of world is it?"

Slated for a 2025 release, Rain98 is an indie ADV set in 1998.

You'll interact with Amahara Reina on a journey that'll decide the fate of the world.

Along the way through this delusional blend of raising sim and horror visual novel, expect lo-fi beats, lots of minigames, endless rain, and a good dose of nostalgia.

An English Patch for Kikou Soushin Val-Kaizer is out!

what are you reading?

marica マリカ
～真実の世界～

Article Writer:
Takafumi Sakagami

Review

It's been 30 years since the Sega Saturn launched, and to celebrate, Beep Magazine put out some articles involving people who worked on Sega Saturn games at the time.

The second article they put out was an interview with Endou Shoujirou about **Marica**, an RPG I've long been wanting to play.
This is a good enough excuse, so to read that article, I shall first make my own!



It's 1997, Shibuya, and a young girl named Kanzaki Marica is being her ever-dependable self, helping her mother with chores. This time, she's off to the shops to buy some meat for a stew.

On her way back home, she runs into a school friend who gets talking about how cool it'd be to become a hero.
A random topic, I assure you.



But before we continue, I want to interrupt this quick synopsis to talk about the presentation.
See, this isn't any old 2D RPG, no no, this is different. How? Well...

You may have already noticed something quite distinctive about the screenshots thus far.
This is a game that blends the usual RPG affair (of the time, at least) with a storytelling format more similar to... I'm not even sure what to liken it to.
A TV drama? An audio drama? Some kind of drama!

What this means is that you're not gonna be reading very much.
When story segments begin, they're not a series of textboxes as you'd expect, but instead, it's all audio-based.

Like in a TV show of the times, a deep-voiced narrator establishes the scene and fills in gaps between scenes in a neutral yet dramatic fashion. '80s and '90s anime fans will definitely be familiar with the style.



Characters speak while animated portraits and CGs add visual flair. The cadence of the dialogue—the pacing between one line and the next—is really smooth and casual, not like the stilted pacing we're used to.

It is, in direction, more like an audio drama. I happen to be a massive fan of audio dramas. If you've ever wondered who those blu-ray pack ins and low view count Youtube channels were for, it's me;
I'm the audio drama fan.

For a more mainstream comparison, if you've seen **SSSS.Gridman** (or its follow-ups) Marica's closer to how that sounds than any normal anime.

That is, quite genuinely, the sole reason I'm playing this game. It's a radio play with some anime visuals, padded out with RPG stuff.

That being said, there are some other obvious points of appeal that one may notice while looking the game up.
To name a couple, the character designs and the setting.

One of the nice things about the modern setting featured here is that the environments have a really relatable charm to them. Shops are full of items like socks, scarves, stockings, and health potions of course. Can't get rid of potions!

I'd say the only downside is that, because this is set in Japan, you can't cross the road unless the traffic lights are in your favour. As an English person, I've never realized just how much I take my ability to cross the road whenever I want (in real life or in games) for granted.



As the story segments play out, animated as they are, time doesn't awkwardly pause to let the scenes play out.
Chat with someone in the middle of the city and you'll still be able to see people walking to and fro, cars driving by, traffic lights changing.

It's a tiny detail, and I'm sure I wouldn't care much if everything paused during cut-scenes, but again, it adds relatability.
Stuck gossiping with someone about a pointless topic while the world passes you by... That's life, and I can feel it in this game.

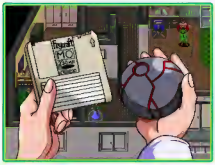


Anyway, Marica heads home with some ingredients, but a rabid dog yoinks the food and runs off. Marica, fueled by frustration, gives chase.

Into a creepy looking medical facility, a bloodied man covered in bandages lay dying, the rabid dog seemingly his pet.

He gives Marica a couple items, a floppy disk and a bulb, but before she can leave, two armed men (also bandaged up) teleport in and attack.

With the two strange items in hand, Marica makes an escape.



It's a weird situation for a schoolgirl to suddenly find herself in, and Marica's dialogue and voice acting elevates the whole experience.

From her brash almost delinquenty shouting when chasing the dog, to the candid observations of her inner monologue when faced with weird stuff, it's fun to listen to.

The comedy of the dialogue spans much further, in a sort of subdued approach. As Marica mulls over the day's madness during dinner, her family cheerfully talk about going to Egypt.

Naturally, Marica isn't paying much attention to it, and she quietly leaves the table when she's done eating, to which her dad somberly mutters...

"I didn't know she hated Egypt so much..."

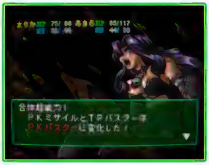
The bandaged dudes—members of a secret organization named the Faction of True (Fact for short)—bring along a crazy gun-wielding lion man named Solomon to assault the Kanzaki household.
With the bulb in her hand lighting up, Marica awakens to psychic powers, and the JRPG fighting can begin!

Battles play out in the usual JRPG fashion. You can attack, use skills or items, defend, and finally, you can run away.
Give your party members their commands, everyone takes their turn, and then you issue the next set of commands.



It's very straight forward for the most part, largely focused on stacking buffs for high damage,but sometimes the flow will be broken by a 'combined attack' feature, where certain skills your party members can use will combine into singular stronger attacks.

For example, if your first two party members use their starting damage skills (both of them simple single-target spells) they'll combine into an AOE attack.



The real unique touch here is the formatting of battles, made to integrate with the aesthetic of the rest of the game incredibly well.

Choose your command and an anime-style cutscene will trigger. The same is true of enemies.

Imagine an episode of the original **Pokemon** series. Ash tells Pikachu to use Thunderbolt, a lightly-animated image of Pikachu plays over a panning background of action stripes, a quick flash of epilepsy-triggering lightning fills the screen, and then a sequence of the enemy taking damage happens.
It's that, but replace Ash and Pikachu with cute anime girls. You're playing a TV show!



While this looks (and sounds) incredibly cool, and it makes boss battles very entertaining, the pace of encounters is very slow.

This game is very much a product of that PS1-era design approach, where fights are slow but flashy and environments are detailed but take a few seconds to load.

The price of beauty is pace, and **Marica** isn't winning any race.

But then sometimes, particularly during important fights, entire conversations will play out inbetween actions, and because the presentation of attacks is identical to how cutscenes are usually done, it blends together spectacularly.

For every drawback, there's a benefit.

marica
～真実の世界～

what are you reading?

After surviving her battle with her pursuers, several parties hidden from normal society take notice of Kanzaki Marica.

In response to the panic from Kanzaki's family, an investigator begins snooping around.

Elsewhere, the leader of the attackers, a Yakuza-type named Trueman, begins a large scale operation to assassinate Marica, in classic TV show fashion: by sending goons of gradually increasing capabilities.
If Solomon couldn't cut it, maybe the famous assassin Killer Zero will do the job?



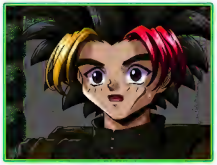
Just as Marica's story begins, so too does another. Kanemoto Akira, a tough bat-wielding gangleader girl with psychic powers, is looking for one of her men. He's found in a bar, looking kinda zombiefied, obsessed with listening to a specific album with his walkman.
The mess of notes he's obsessed with is credited to a guy named Trueman...

Naturally, Akira heads to the closest record store and smashes every copy of the album they have, making her a target of the same men hunting Marica.



Akira buddies up with Marica, and the two go hunting for more allies.
Their first catch is a boy named Nobunaga, but it turns out... he's just a prankster, pretending to be a psychic.

In trying to get him on side, our girls get him caught up in this life-threatening conflict, his family gets killed, and he's left with nowhere to go but to stick with the psychic squad.



Though he lacks any sort of power, he's good with computers and has a talent for getting information.

One of those bits of information involves a schoolgirl he knows. This girl has a bit of a reputation for being exceptional, so much of a reputation that... well, she's already been kidnapped by the big bad organization!



Toudou Kaname, kidnapped daughter of a rich man, is our final party member.
She's an ojousama, a bit of a tomboy, and her weapon of choice is... her fists, usually.

If this were **Final Fantasy**, she'd be a monk ...or a black belt, depending on the localization.

Our four heroes do battle against the evil organization's escalating attack plans, fighting all across the city, partly to prevent the corruption of the people but mostly out of self-defense.



I think it's important to point out the elephants in the room: the two main design principles behind this game.

Firstly, this is a JRPG set in modern day Tokyo (at the time of release, at least) targeted at a more mature audience.
That's something of a rarity, even today.

Secondly, the cultural identity of this game is striking.
Beginning development in one of modern day Japan's most defining years—1995—it's exactly what you'd expect of the zeitgeist.

It combines Japan's two most iconic genres: mystery and sci-fi, and with them as the core focus, it builds a story around the urban environment that encompasses Japan's modern image.

There's a cult, the city is under threat, poverty is beginning to sink in.
Welcome to Japan!



This is contrasted with the **Super Sentai** styling of the overall production, a cheesy Japanese TV lens capturing a rather dire circumstance.

Of course, it's also presented as an RPG, carrying some of that **Dragon Quest** spirit, and is led by a squad of beautiful fighting girls.

I would go so far as to say that this is the most Japanese JRPG ever made.
It's a hodge-podge of everything that made manga, anime, and the adjacent industries what they are today.

The sad thing is, this is locked to the Sega Saturn. It never released for any other platform at the time, and it hasn't been ported to anything since.

That's a shame not only for the game's accessibility issues (meaning both the lack of hardware to play it on as well as things like the lack of subtitles or the epilepsy-inducing light shows) but some quality of life changes could really benefit the players.



Look at the Pause menu, for example. It's not completely plain; a handy button, alongside usuals such as Equipment, Options, and Save/Load, is 'Think'.
This brings up a reminder of your current objective. That's good!

But then... the Options menu is sorely lacking in features.
You can't, for example, adjust the audio levels at all!
Sometimes a character will whisper something and you'll wish the music was a bit quieter, but alas...

Loading screens are long and frequent, and in the overworld, only one enemy AI can be active at once.



The equipment feature (as well as purchasing/selling items) suffers from a limited menu scope, meaning you have to leave the shop, bring up the pause menu, open up the equipment menu, and check what everything is actually doing to your stats.

The technical aspects of the game—arguably too ambitious for its own good—really brings down an overwise great experience.



While we're on the topic, on a technical level, the odds of this game getting a translation of any kind is likely impossible.

For one, it's 90% audio-based with no subtitles, which is a heavy complication in its own right. It's what stops me from seriously considering translating the **Roommania** games!

But more than that, hacking features like that (subtitles, that is) into a Saturn game requires a very niche skillset.

But I strongly believe that this RPG has a good, dedicated audience ready and waiting for it, even today.

It's a late '80s anime that you can play, a season of a Sentai show in **Shin Megami Tensei** wrapping, and more than anything... it's authentic. Not a throwback, but a time capsule.



The core experience is great, but this is truly a title that suffers under the limitations of its platform.

Were it to ever get a modern re-release with a layer of polish, or should Saturn emulation drastically improve all of a sudden to allow for much-needed quality of life changes, I'd eagerly recommend **Marica** to many.





Kissing!! under the mistletoe

What are you Reading?

今年のXmasロロ……、ボクが着ぐるみのサンタになる。

In case you missed it somehow, prior to this issue releasing, Christmas happened! I decided to play something suitably seasonal on X-mas day, and what could be more seasonal than a game with a Christmas tree in the logo?
Here's **Kissing!! ~under the mistletoe~**.

If you've never heard of it, don't worry, neither has anyone else.

Article Writer: Takafumi Sakagami

Review

In 2004, titles such as **Fate/Stay Night**, **Clannad** and **ToHeart2** launched to much acclaim, changing the expectations people had for the industry in the process. But a year prior, late in 2003, a game released with tech that would blow all of those out of the water!

Developed by a brand who only ever made one game, available to purchase for a very short time, and so unpopular, you've likely never heard of it, was **Kissing!! ~under the mistletoe~**.



Yup, that's Kawahara Makoto's art right there, one of my all-time favourite artists, but don't let his aesthetic colour your expectations; a carnival of madness, this is not.
Instead, **Kissing!!** is a pretty generic rom-com eroge. The story isn't special by any means, and it doesn't take itself seriously.

Light Christmas cheese – that's what I want out of my seasonal stories, and that's exactly what **Kissing!!** is.

You play as a guy named Kotaro. He's reckless, foolhardy and disrespectful, and so, in an act of pure boredom, he ends up defacing a sacred stone.

His family runs a company that specializes in Christmas events, but Kotaro's dad suddenly decides to retire, putting the town's Christmas in danger, and with it, their family's income.



But this is just a convenient excuse for Kotarou to pursue his true goal: finding a girlfriend.
He'll be the hero who saves the day by finding pretty girls who will attract attention for their festive event. It's a perfect plan!

What follows is a pretty typical eroge affair: pick a girl, avoid bad ends, enjoy some simple melodrama, and collect the various H-scenes.
Oh, but it's Christmas-themed this time!

A Bit of Backstory

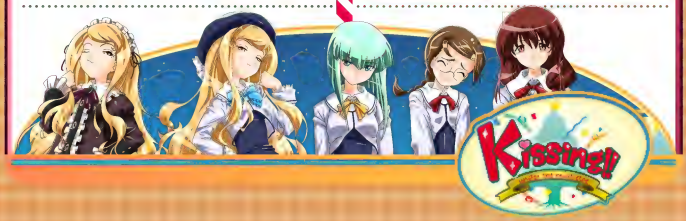
BACKSTORY
Kissing!! ~ under the mistletoe ~

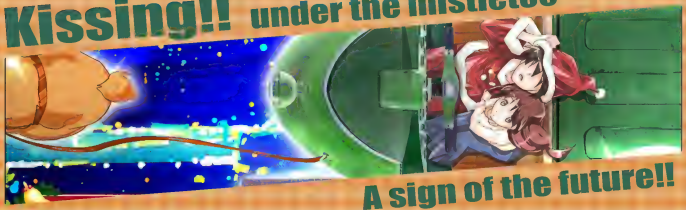
Kissing!! was made by Valhalla, a dev team that disbanded shortly after this game's 2003 release.
The story of this project's development is part of a messy legal dispute bridging the brands Frontwing and OVERDRIVE, two industry names you're sure to recognize.

Not only does the reputation of those two brands overshadow this game's, but it wasn't very popular, it has a generic hard-to-google name, and it'll never get a reprint or remake.
Even if you do somehow find a copy of it, it has some tech issues on modern Windows that you'll have to troubleshoot. This is as far from accessible as a Windows-based non-DRM piece of software gets.

Also, surprise! It's an ojousama game! Kinda...







Animation & Function





ART & TECHNOLOGY
Kissing!! ~ under the mistletoe ~

First of all, we really should talk about the art, and yup... it's the **Carnival** artist alright. This was actually Kawahara Makoto's first showing as a video game artist, and as you can see, it was perfection from the start.
Look at those expressions. I love 'em. I could stare at this artwork all day.

As a personal aside, other than Mahiro Takeumi on a good day, I can't think of any artist from this early '00s time period that I like the work of more.

But the characters aren't just expressive; they're animated, literally. This game has blink animations, which have randomized timing that's separate for each character, as well as lip flaps that match the voice lines being played.





* This collection of expressions is all part of a single sprite—a single image file—that the game engine automatically animates in response to time (for blinking) and input audio (for mouth movement).

The game also has camera panning that's detached from line-by-line progression, ala **Mahoutsukai no Yoru**, meaning that this is a pretty cinematic experience for a game from 2003, when it wants to be.

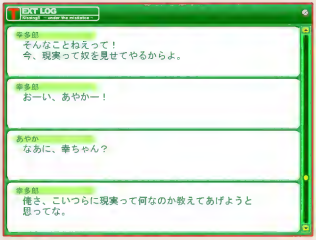
They don't take advantage of this functionality anywhere near as much as they should, sadly, but it does pop up to set the mood of a scene sometimes.



The UI here's very interesting. It's a unique layout, but familiar enough to immediately understand.



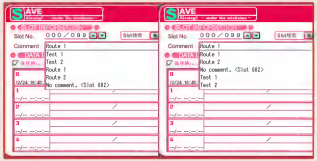
There are three textbox designs to choose from, which you can change whenever you want. This modifies not only the dialogue box, but also the date window up top.
You can hide that date window if you want, but it comes with some handy buttons attached: save, load, and screenshot! This can all be accessed via a right click menu too.



There's a function to scroll back through messages using the dialogue box, but there's also a dedicated screen for a backlog if you prefer it like that.
Voice lines can be replayed through both.

For saving and loading, you get 100 pages of 9 saves, and you can name each page and comment on each save. You could, for example, make pages for each route. In those pages, you could have saves labeled things such as *'choice: A, B, C'* or *'Day 2'*.

These pages can also be sorted, so if you name all your pages for Ayaka's route *'Ayaka Route x'* where x is a number, then searching for *'Ayaka'* will move them to the top of your list.



It's when this functionality combines with the game's built-in flowchart that the ease of navigation becomes remarkable. From a save file, you can jump back to any scene you passed on your journey. It shows you where you branched, where you could've branched, and allows you a single-press method of jumping immediately to any scene.
Kissing!! has multiple endings per route, so this is pretty handy.

Once you've unlocked one ending for a certain heroine's route, getting the other endings for that heroine is very achievable while still requiring some thought and planning.
You're not gonna feel the compulsion to google a guide; you'll want to figure it out on your own.



JANUARY 2, 2025 0 COMMENTS

TALKING ABOUT 2024

The gap between this issue and the last may be larger than usual, but that doesn't mean I haven't been busy! In the time between this volume of C-pia! and the last, the Plsnohate blog has featured:



THOUGHTS ON: TRAPEZIUM



~SPOILER FREE~ FINAL THOUGHTS: FALL 2024

Reviews of more than 30 different anime, all of which released during 2024 or at the very start of 2025...



Favorite anime: Gimai Seikatsu Covered Previously

So... it was tough to choose the big winner this year, both because there were six very very good shows running through my mind, but also because none of those shows were without major imperfections.
In the case of the winner I ultimately decided upon, *Gimai Seikatsu* isn't exactly an interesting story. If someone was driven to boredom by attempting to watch it, I wouldn't be surprised in the slightest. There's little to latch onto narratively, and what little there is... is mundane.



Ao no Hako
Episodes Watched: 25/25
Rating: 8/10

At a school focused on sports and athletics, a boy named Taiki admires his crush, Chiaatsu Kano, from afar. They interact rarely, and though their interactions are always sweet and they happen to have a lot in common, they're practically strangers. But one day, when a conversation between the two leads to 'putting in effort', Taiki recalls an event where he caught her practicing late into the day, tears in her eyes.



This sort of post modern trait grabbing nature of anime fills in more blanks than there is actual connective tissue. The tropey characters aren't communicated via the show, but are dependent on your pre built knowledge of those archetypes.
It's an interesting shortcut to take in order to cram the story into a single season of episodes, but it's obviously not ideal. Sacrifices were made.
And let's talk about that protagonist, shall we? Kurumi Mirui, the hopeful, talentless, ordinary magical girl protagonist. She is herself a trope.
Despite being, by her very premise, incredible enough to come first in the mock

Please, no Hate



Favorite moment: 2.5 Jigen no Kirisa – Covered Previously

A year-in-review of 2024's anime output.
What was my favourite show? My favourite character?
What am I looking forward to in 2025?

2024 was my favourite year of anime of all time, by the way!

A 50-minute video analysis of Ave Mujica, the latest anime entry in the BanG Dream! franchise.
I don't do Youtube much, but when I do, it's something good.
I did a video for the series' predecessor, MyGO!!!!!, as well.





KAMiBAKO
A Brief Review

A review of the newly-released JRPG KAMiBAKO.
It's a sort of Diablo-Atelier hybrid that provides a never-ending list of tasks to mindlessly tackle.

It flew under the radar, but if you're looking for a game to occupy you while you multitask, this is certainly one.

A review of Venus Vacation Prism, a visual novel with the Dead or Alive artstyle and lots of '00s RnB in the OST.

It involves a gimmick where you can pause the game at any moment to take a photo.
Oh, and it's probably my game of the year.



Venus Vacation Prism
A Snapshot Review

And more!





At the same time, I played Dragon Quest for the Famicom. God knows I don't have the energy to play anything that requires thought or attention.





Something Special About... FORTUNE ARTERIAL

Article Writer:
Takafumi Sakagami

WHAT IS IT YOU WANT TO BE?

When I was young, I didn't know what I wanted to be, and I was never in a rush to find out.
My brother decided at an early age that he was going to be an olympic sprinter, my best male friend was to be an actor, my best female friend wanted to raise and protect birds.

But for me... Maybe it was choice paralysis.
I was surrounded by people lesser than me, impressed by every little thing, who always asserted I could do anything. But having your starting line placed a little further down the track doesn't matter if you refuse to run.

My brother never reached the Olympics; addiction and truancy took over.
One friend realized how overshadowed he was, even by those uninterested in acting, and a pandemic made short work of the birds my other friend longed to protect.

They were three individuals who tried to step onto the stage, to lead their own performance, but none of them succeeded. A triplet of fools.

I wasn't backstage. I wasn't in the audience. I enjoyed their stories like I do all western entertainment: I listened to someone else's critique.

Instead, I was at home, enjoying anime, games, and later a childhood darling: **Fortune Arterial**.

It's 2009. The economy is dying, society is struggling to grapple with the reality of TVs becoming widescreen even though most computer monitors are still 4:3, visual novel readers worldwide have somehow all agreed to buy PSPs so they can play **Monster Hunter** together, and Taka here has just begun publishing reviews online!

Thinking back, I'd just gotten done with **Saya no Uta**, if I'm remembering it right...

At that time, I'd become involved with a certain bunch of internet nerds. They were deep in the tech trenches before I was even old enough to walk to school by myself.

They would import games from Japan and stream them to our private group. This was before livestreaming was really a thing, so we used this clunky software intended for multi-region business conferences, which one of the guys nabbed a copy of from his work machine.

Even at the time, it felt 10 years out of date, so that's how you know it was made for professionals.

ANOTHER VIEW

Usually they would stream patch previews for whatever translation effort they'd managed to stealthily steal an early copy from. **Higurashi**, **Fate**, **Da Capo**, **AIR**, and so on...

But every once in a while, they'd deviate from translation patches, and when they weren't boring me to tears with streams of an **Evangelion** film or something, they were playing popular untranslated titles.

One of them, for one night, was **Fortune Arterial**.













Employing a setting more commonly seen in otome games than bishoujo games, **Fortune Arterial** is a tale of vampires who secretly inhabit a Britain-inspired boarding school.

In the mix alongside pretty boys and posh ladies is our protagonist, Hasekura Kouhei.
He's an ordinary outsider with no idea of the world he's about to enter.

But let's ignore the premise briefly to jump straight to the hook. Why is **Fortune Arterial** a childhood darling of mine?
To put it simply, it's well-produced, startlingly so. It is, in my heart, what **Mahoyo** or the **Tsukihime Remake** are to others – cinema.

Getting into the game, we immediately get the sense that the team behind this is experienced. Well-written prose fits tightly into the small textbox, and as it sets up metaphors in text, the rest of the game's presentation follows in step.

Protagonist Kouhei, who has spent most of his life travelling across Japan, uses the metaphor of a migratory bird to begin his story.

It's a metaphor I'm sure we're all very familiar and maybe even tired of, but the compliment of ambient sound to inform you that he's on a train passing through a tunnel, as well as the visual of tunnel lights passing by the train window, make it more than the plain old affair.





This graphic, representing the lights outside the confines of the train, brisky moves from the left of screen to right, looking in motion like the silhouette of a white bird, and that adds some immediate originality to the concept.

As I've said before, a metaphor is best when it's justified; when a sprinting metaphor is preceeded by the tale of a sprinter, or a stage metaphor is foreshadowed by the mention of an actor.

If you pull a metaphor out of nowhere, it feels cheap; you're being flowery for vanity's sake.

But when you justify it, when you give the metaphor purpose, it works.
The protagonist here isn't just randomly explaining how he's like a migratory bird because the reader needs it; he's effectively doing a blotch test.

A blurry light passes by and what does he see?
The silhouette of a creature that travels for its whole life.
He sees himself.

To give another example from the prologue, a night time walk between two student council members leads into an observation about the nearby streetlamps which illuminate the school. This creates a metaphor: the academy is a stage, these are the stage lights. The student council are the ones backstage, maintaining everything.

This metaphor builds into one of actors and to the protagonist's distant way of living. Because he was always busy moving from one place to the next, he never had a role in any given place, and never had a chance to play a part in the lives of the people he met along the way, or rather... he avoided it.



When metaphorical language appears in game (it's relatively rare, compared to the average bishoujoge) it is—more often than not—grounded within an established physical element of the environment. It's observational, not an out-of-nowhere bit of prose from our average teenagers who have no interest in writing.

I wouldn't go so far as to say its use of metaphors is perfect, and they aren't all that common, but the sheer practicality of this approach puts it above 99% of the competition, when it comes to my own metrics of what constitutes good writing, at least.

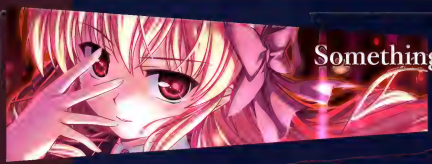
If I'm selling you on it, great, but as we've seen before, getting an older game to run on modern Windows can be troublesome.

Much like **Parfait** in the past, to get the original release of **Fortune Arterial** running correctly, we'll have to tamper with some hex values.
Unlike **Parfait**, however, **Fortune Arterial** requires far more effort to get it running perfectly. Thankfully, a fanmade solution for automating all the work has existed since... well, almost as long as the game has!

You can find this patch on the official C-pia! website.

Hit the 'P' in the C-pia! logo to find our Patches page!





Something Special About... FORTUNE ARTERIAL

Kouhei is welcomed by the school's vice president Erika, but a greeting handshake is cut short by a scream.
Erika suddenly jolts away from Kouhei and begins acting strangely, eventually leaving him earlier than planned.

It's a weird meeting, but aside from that, life is fine.

Kouhei becomes buddies with a guy in a nearby dorm room, he catches up with two old friends from a previous school, and with camera in hand, he begins doing a sightseeing tour of the school that a friend plotted out.
A normal school life, it is.

But at the end of the first day, we're treated to a perspective switch.
Erika, unable to sleep, can't stop thinking about Kouhei. Is it because she likes him?
No, it's not that... and yet, the name Hasekura Kouhei continues to fill her thoughts, never letting another thought through.

Erika's brother, the student council president, soon learns about Kouhei and becomes interested in him.
Thus, a plan involving our unsuspecting protagonist begins.

This is a story about a meeting between transient humans and eternal vampires.

Along the way, you'll be treated to some fun little features, such as disconnected manga-like panels that allow for alternate presentation styles, which can be animated independantly of the main frame.

The sound direction is worth a mention too. Sfx are plentiful, ambience is used very effectively, and care has been put into details such as... the proximity of voices.

If a character is close, they'll sound close. If they start to walk away, their voice will grow distant.
If they're shouting from another room, it'll sound that way.
Great attention to detail.







Do you know what **Fortune Arterial**, **Little Busters!** and **Fate/Stay Night** have in common?
The girls may be pretty, but anyone who overlooks the boys is missing out. The guys are incredible.

The way that scenes are written, paced and programmed when it comes to the male cast makes for this perfect representation of boys will be boys.

The banter and the off-the-cuff ribbing of each other, it's very light and deemphasized within the script, which only makes it feel more right.

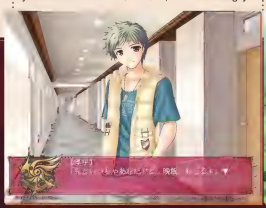
One of the first people you'll meet is Tsukasa, who is neither comically over the top nor inhumanly stoic... he's just chill.
He has the casual energy to carry a conversation, but he won't enunciate well and he'll always prefer blunt, shortened forms over textbook Japanese.

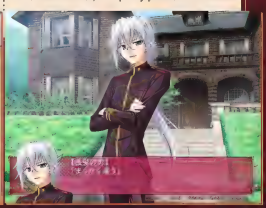
His friendship with Kouhei isn't an oft-spoken thing, but you take it for granted because he's your bro, y'know? Rather than a character, he's a normal guy.

Our handsome student council lads are a bit more tropey on the surface. An eccentric clown and a sensible stoic form this stereotypical comedy duo.

Iori is a clown, but his comedy style is... petty.
If you were shocked by something sudden but harmless like... a loud noise, he would make fun of you by mimicking your yell of surprise.

Seiichirou is strict, but quietly protective of others.





The question I asked at the start of this article...
"What is it you want to be?"
That is the question that lifts **Fortune Arterial** up.

From the vampires with different opinions on how moral the natural inclinations of a vampire are, to modified humans who question their own nature – are they even a defined species anymore?

At the core of it all, a migratory bird who only knows that he no longer wants to fly.
In landing and giving up flight, he becomes "human".
He forges connections. He becomes busy, engaging in mundane yet vital tasks. His life, to his own heart, is finally justified.

Have you, like Kouhei, become "human" yet?
Have you decided on the way of life you want to lead?

I, who first read this, had not. I was surrounded by people who propped me up to satisfy their own expectations, and I wanted all of them to be wrong.
But in the many years since, I've found my answer... and like the sprinter, the actor, and the avian vet, my answer will never come true. I will fail to reach my goal.

Even so, like the fools they were, I step up on stage and live each day as if my dream will honestly become reality.
For it's better to try and fail than to never find your answer.



"WHAT IS IT YOU WANT TO BE?"

I want to be eternal.
Being "human" simply isn't good enough.

ANOTHER VIEW END

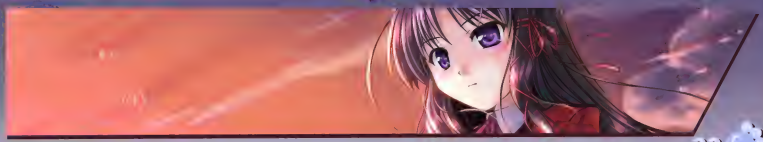
// PLAYED IT YET?

I don't think Fortune Arterial has been translated into English yet, so I have to presume this is a niche one, all things considered. Well, as niche as an AUGUST game can get...

I didn't talk about it much in the article proper, but obviously the main appeal of these kinds of games is in the heroines. They're the lifeblood of the game, and I find that this is one of the few games where I struggle to pick a favourite. There's a lot to like about all of them, and each one has a handful of moments that temporarily put them above the competition.
It's rare to get a story where the heroines are quite so equal, I think.

In the end though, I think I'd say Kuze Kiriha is my favourite. Gap moe's always an easy appeal, right?
And the quandaries of her route are interesting, moreso than the rest. I'm a fan.... Are you?

FORTUNE ARTERIAL



What's Over There!?

ロードス島戦記
Record of Lodoss War

Article Writer: Tshotsuo Sreotomi

Lodoss

IN THE EASTERN KINGDOM OF ALANIA, SIX ADVENTURERS BEGIN THEIR JOURNEY. THEY HAIL FROM AN ISLAND NAMED... 'LODOSS'

This is the beginning of a story that has been told many times in many forms.
You may not have read this story, may not have watched it or listened to it, but even so... I'm sure everybody reading this somehow knows **Lodoss-tou Senki**.
Personally, I've never even glanced at it, but I've been eager to get into the franchise for a long time, so here I am, having a quick look at **Lodoss**.



THE ORIGINAL

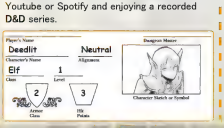
In Comptiq magazine, from September 1986 until April 1987, a run of articles all about **Lodoss-tou Senki** was printed monthly.

These articles are abridged written recordings of a long-form **Dungeons & Dragons** session run by Dungeon Master Mizuno Ryo and his six players.
It was designed as an introduction to tabletop roleplaying games (as well as a bit of a history lesson) for newer gamers who had gotten into the genre via computer-based counterparts such as **Dragon Quest**.

These articles, quite conveniently, have been archived for future generations to enjoy, and an individual named Trotti has even translated the firs two series into English, so you can get reading at any point!

It's a rough translation, but its existence is a blessing, because this the rawest form of the story. You're at the table with the players, listening to them chat, learning the rules along-side them, and watching the events unfold, volume by volume.

It's the oldschool equivalent of going onto Youtube or Spotify and enjoying a recorded **D&D** series.





Though the starting adventure is a bit rough around the edges due to some inexperience from the players (and the magazine), it quickly finds its stride.
It's a light read, so you can blast through it in a sitting or two, and if you want to experience the **Lodoss-tou Senki** campaign in as short a time as possible, this is the way, no question.

The downside of this is that there's no prose to dig your teeth into, and neither the cast nor the adventures are particularly characterful.
Despite that, there's a charm to the characters in how they are played.

The party leader Parn will always take the fool-hardy approach in everything he does.
Slayn will always question the DM on every little thing.
Etoh always has some ingenious plan in his back pocket.

The players fall into their roles perfectly; the thief's laugh mischievous, and the dwarf's interjections blunt. It's a candid manner of story telling, and after a while, you'll be responding to each player's reactions with *"that's so him"*.

If you're a fan of '80s RPGs, you will almost immediately recognize that this is a product of the same culture.
Similarly, if you're a fan of fantasy Light Novels, you're going to recognize some things.
The dungeoneering experience, for example, is incredibly similar to **Mushoku Tensei**'s Teleportation Labyrinth arc, not just in the procedure of mapping and checking for traps, but in the party formation.
Parn is Paul, Deedlit is Elinalise, Ghim is Talhand, Wood Chuck is Geese, and so on...

Part of the joy of the original **Lodoss-tou Senki** comes from this mix of introducing D&D to a country of recently-made RPG fans, and establishing ideas that would define later works.
From a certain viewpoint, it reminds me of the **Urusei Yatsura** anime; it's both a love letter to the industry of the past, but also the bringer of change that, in retrospect, is easy to notice.

But it's important to acknowledge that this take on the story didn't have a wide distribution.
At the time of its early publishing there were fewer than 200 active readers, and licensing issues have prevented it from being re-published, which means that this isn't the most well-known iteration of **Lodoss-tou Senki**.

For that, you'll have to read the novels...

THE GAMES

There are a lot of **Lodoss-tou Senki** games, and to be honest, most of them aren't good. There's one in particular I wanted to look at, however, because it's set inbetween the two Replay series (**Record** and **Legend**) and focuses substantially on some of the more interesting nuggets of information you'll hear about while reading those.

In the past, there was a great war against evil, and only six returned. These six heroes are the backbone of the **Lodoss-tou Senki** setting as we know it, working as the main story NPCs throughout the **DnD** adventure, and the earliest mysteries of the story tend to involve at least one of the six.



So in the SNES iteration of **Lodoss-tou Senki**, you get to play through the struggles of post-war living for some of these heroes.
How did they end up where they are today? Where did they end up?

The game then ends with a retelling of the original Replay, with you playing as the party members like the guys in the magazine did.

The other notable thing about this game especially is that it's incredibly accessible. It came out on the SNES, for one thing, so it can be emulated on basically every platform under the sun. It also has a fan translation!



Some incredible music accompanies the top-down RPG journey from one location to another, each one bridged by an overworld full of random encounters.

These random encounters lead to SRPG-style battles. Think **Langrisser**, **Shining Force**, or **Fire Emblem**, but don't think too hard; this Lodoss-set adventure plays out differently than the competition.



The battle board is tiny, so your options in positioning are incredibly limited, and there are no differences in the board's layout from one battle to the next.

You can't cheese enemies through a choke point or abuse terrain differences; you're on equal footing with the enemy at all points.

What does change from one battle to the next is what skills and equipment you and the enemies have access to.
You'll run into different foes capable of doing different things, you'll find weapons that have completely different playstyles, and your party members will change frequently.

Even the initial party member that you begin the game with has a mechanic where their skills, equipment and class get completely replaced, so you're always being given new tools to utilize.

To keep the balance in such a small board, there are various mechanics.
Ranged weapons can appear strong, as can AOE magic, but turn order is determined by a speed stat.
If a melee character buffs up their speed sufficiently, they could rush down a ranged opponent quite quickly.

Furthermore, if you use an attack that has knockback (such as a basic melee attack) to shove an enemy off the far end of the board, they automatically die.
Plus, the formation's strength crumbles should their party leader die. Find the leader, kill them or knock them off the board, and the other enemies will run.

I'd also say it does a good job integrating light **DnD** mechanics into the experience. Its way of navigating the player feels far more DM-driven than **Final Fantasy** or **Dragon Quest** did, that's for sure.
We don't have Vancian magic, but if your character runs out of MP, they're immobilized until the end of battle.

Despite the immediate simplicity, it's addictive. In extended dungeons, however, the slower pace of combat can grow tedious.

This is just the game that caught my interest most. There are plenty of others to choose from, however.

Some, like the two PC-based RPGs or the two PC Engine versions, choose to liberally adapt the events of the original story into an RPG format familiar to other computer RPGs of the '80s and '90s. They're far more menu-based than the console RPG we just covered. They are only available in Japanese, though.

There's also a Diablo clone for the Dreamcast that has an official English release, but it basically wears the IP as brand recognition without providing anything of substance for fans of the franchise to appreciate.
Don't blame me for skipping over that one.



Pictured left: *Lodoss-tou Senki for PC-Engine.*

Pictured below: *Deedlit in Wonder Labyrinth.*

The only other **Lodoss-tou Senki** video game released in English happens to be the latest (and most popular) entry: **Deedlit in Wonder Labyrinth**. It's a relatively short metroidvania focusing on, of course, Deedlit, as she explores a labyrinth by her lonesome.

As much as I'd love to play this game and talk about it, it's set after everything else and does, in fact, spoil everything else, so... I'm not touching it with a six foot pole.
It's something to look forward to, for me.

That being said, I do know people who've gotten into the franchise via this game, and have enjoyed retroactively piecing the plot together while digging into the rest of what **Lodoss-tou Senki** has to offer.



THE NOVELS

The novel format is really the main medium used to tell the story of **Lodoss-tou Senki**, it's probably the best way of engaging with the IP if you care about story more than anything.

There are novelizations of both Replay series, as well as a third series set after the events of Record, plus a whole bunch of spinoffs.

Now, I first began seriously planning to get into **Lodoss-tou Senki** back in 2019, and I've been trucking along with the Japanese novels ever since, because there's not much choice.
This isn't the accessible path... or so I thought.

There were, at that point in time, scant few translations for the **Lodoss** novels, but in the time since 2019 and now, every single **Lodoss-tou Senki** novel has been translated into English, as well as *every* single volume of the spinoff series **Crystania**, and a majority of the many other side stories set in the same world.


Record of Lodoss War Wiki
IN EXPLORE
CHARACTERS
EPISODES
MEDIA
Record of Lodoss War (complete)
Record of Lodoss War: The Fire Dancer
team: Gigamesh108, Eternal Sage, Zantan05
completed: January 2022
link to fan translation: here.
Record of Lodoss War: The Demon Dragon of Fire Dragon Mountain I
team: Gigamesh108, Eternal Sage, Zorvat, Zantan03
completed: 28 July 2023
link to fan translation: here.
Record of Lodoss War: The Demon Dragon of Fire Dragon Mountain II
team: Gigamesh108, Zorvat, KoolHeartatsea, Zantan03
completed: 24 October 2023
link to fan translation: here.
Record of Lodoss War: The Elogir Holy War
team: Gigamesh108, Zorvat, KoolHeartatsea, Zantan05
completed: 15 April 2022
link to fan translation: here.
Record of Lodoss War: The Holy Knight of Lodoss 1
team: Gigamesh108, Zantan03
completed: 28 November 2023
link to fan translation: here.

And as if that wasn't enough, they've also translated the audio dramas!

All of these translations can be found with a quick search of:

Record of Lodoss War Wiki: Fan-translations

I recommend giving it a browse, if only to marvel at how much they were able to translate in a 3-year period. It's impressive.



It should go without saying that reading the core novels gives you the best possible entry point and pathway through the **Lodoss-tou Senki** storyline.
Well, so long as you're willing to read a book, that is.
However, I think there will be people out there who feel hesitant to commit to a long series of books without sampling some shorter material, and for those people, there's the **Sword World Short Stories**, a perfect choice.

These books are collections of short fables from within the world of **Lodoss-tou Senki**.
They're pretty insular, they're easy to read, they sell the various vibes of the setting, and hey, the guy who played Deedlit in the original Replay series wrote a bunch of these stories!

Whether you use those short stories as your gateway or not, you'll surely want to check out the core novels if you have any interest in the franchise.

There are three series to feast on.
Lodoss-tou Senki or **Record of Lodoss War** is an adaptation of the Replay series of the same name.
That's also true of **Lodoss-tou Densetsu** or **Legend of Lodoss**, an adaptation of the second Replay series.
Then finally we have **Shin Lodoss-tou Senki** or **Record of Lodoss War Next Generation**.

Starting with **Hairo no Majo** or **The Grey Witch**, the novel begins in a familiar yet different fashion to the material it adapts: same party, same beginnings, same quest.
But rather than being stand-ins for the players, the characters in the novelization have things like... backstories, motives and relationships.
They have a place within the world they inhabit.

That world has nature, weather and seasons, buildings made of specific materials and townsfolk who wear specific fashion.
It has detail, from the meaningful to the mundane. Traditions, foods, dramas, people.
Everything is fleshed out more and given more narrative purpose than it all had in the original, and with that, of course, comes prose. The meat on the bone, if you will.



The Replays are games set in a world that exists merely as a function.
The PC games, as pretty as they can be, have a degree of distance to them.
All feel rushed and abridged.

If you want to step into a fantasy world and get emotionally invested in it, to feel the passage of time, to see some relationships be born or others sadly die, there's no alternative.

So I find myself, in classic 'Visual Novel fan' fashion, recommending that one push the other mediums aside—even the manga and anime adaptations I failed to speak of—because ...honestly, if you want the best experience, just read the novels. It's really that simple.

Replay
Novel
Game

1987: Record of Lodoss War 1
1988: Record of Lodoss War 1
Record of Lodoss War 11
1989: Record of Lodoss War 111
Record of Lodoss War 2
1990: Record of Lodoss War 3
Record of Lodoss War 4
1991: Record of Lodoss War 5
Record of Lodoss War 6
1993: Record of Lodoss War 7
Legend of Lodoss 1
1994: Legend of Lodoss 2
Legend of Lodoss 1
1995: High Elf Forest
The Black Knight
Record of Lodoss War (SNES)
1996: Legend of Lodoss 3
Legend of Lodoss 2
1997: Spark, the Heroic Knight
Legend of Lodoss 3
1998: Legend of Lodoss 4
Lord of the Dark Island
Next Generation 1
1999: Eternal Returner
Inheritors of the Flame
2001: Next Generation 2
Next Generation 3
2002: Legend of Lodoss 5
2004: Next Generation 4
2005: Next Generation 5
2006: Next Generation 6
2019: The Crown of the Covenant
2020: The Wandering Nobleman's Endless Journey Home
2021: Deedlit in Wonder Labyrinth

A Sepia Lens Look at...





Article Writer:
Takafumi Sakagami

Shuffle!

The interpretation of life is something different to us all.
We all have agency in life, and that's a wonderous thing, but some lives are more important than others.

To some, the color "blue" is a fact of life, but to others, it doesn't exist.
We're all storytellers, in a way, and a storyteller's job is to translate. Thoughts into words, into scenes, into stories. From one life to another.

As a child, I was surrounded by such stories.
The lives around me, of course, but also the stories told on TV, or those in a book, those in a game...
To all, I would judge.

The fact is, not every interpretation illustrated by an author's prose aligned with my own.
The color blue is a fact of life to me; you can't erase that.

Hosoda's interpretation of **Digimon** was far more interesting than anyone else's.
Chobits was far more fascinating than **DearS**.
Kanon 2006 was, in some ways, better than **2002**.

If two people were to make a meaningful choice, one would surely handle it better than the other.

So when the anime adaptation of **Shuffle!** came to an end, I was met with a common thought:

"They made the wrong choice.".



We'll be talking about this thing in a few issues, I promise. What kind of bishoujoge magazine would we be if we never talked about adaptations??

- The path the story went down was not what I'd have chosen.
- The presentation of key moments lacked the atmosphere I'd have ascribed.
- The pacing of scenes was far too fast.

But most petty of all... the heroine I liked didn't win.

We all have agency in life, and that's a wonderous thing, but sometimes that agency requires less effort to enact.
Remaking the **Shuffle!** anime into one that fits my interpretation would demand a lot of effort, a lot of money, and a lot of time.

Changing which heroine won, however... that wouldn't cost very much at all; there was a visual novel, so I could make my own decisions. Someone else had already put in the work to give me that chance.



Shuffle! is a very basic game, largely carried by its art and voice acting.
Gods and devils inhabit Earth, but modern day living isn't much different from our own.

There's little lore, little prose, little nuance, little depth.
You're playing as Mr. Everyman, there are cute girls, let the romance begin!

The charm of it, beyond the previously mentioned highlights, is in how to-the-point it is.
If you've ever wondered what a VN would be like if you cut out all of the verbosity and repetition expected of the format, this is it, and boy does it move fast.
Scenes pass by in seconds. It's a very unique experience...
Is it a good experience, though? Well... it's a popular one, at least.

It's also remarkably difficult to get the best version, because, in classic fashion, there were multiple new editions as well as fandiscs that brought new routes and scenarios, but the availability of these is all over the place.
Don't get me started on the store-exclusive preorder bonuses.



It only gets more complicated once you consider the English releases.
It took MangaGamer 5 years to get the two short (and by then, ancient) spinoff games out: one was ported to Kirikiri, the other to Unity!
Unity of all things! I mean, really? Really!

Speaking of Unity, a publisher named YumeHaven ported an early version of **Shuffle!** to Unity for an additional English Steam release.

It was based on a distinctly not-definitive version of the game, had a very awkward launch mired by mistakes such as... accidentally releasing the game before it was done, and if you try to find it on Steam today, you'll see that it no longer exists.
It was delisted less than 5 years after it launched.
That's uh... less time than it took for MangaGamer to port the spinoffs.

Shuffle!



In making such a game—one that a player can somewhat tailor to suit their own preferences without expending any effort—they open the doors up to player interpretation.

I know that this is nothing new, but sometimes I forget how important it is.

- In a manga, that childhood friend will always lose.
- In a light novel, the character you care about most will inevitably be sidelined for a new plot.
- And you simply won't get to spend much time in the world of an anime.

But these kinds of games... they're modular, and the extent to which you engage with any of the modules is entirely up to you – the player.
Uh, I mean, whenever they aren't forcing you to play one route to unlock another, that is.
That always sucks...

If a scene is boring, you can skip it.
If a route doesn't interest you, you don't have to do it.
And if the character you like most is unpopular... well, someone may've written a route for you yet.
All you have to do is make the right choices.



Agency is a wonderous thing, partly because I have it, but also because you have it.

It's easy to believe that the way you think is right, and the way someone else thinks is wrong.
Your translation is correct, someone else's is flawed.
Your thoughts are right, someone else's are wrong.
Your opinion is moral, someone else's is evil.
That the world we see... is what it is.
A devil on one shoulder; a god on the other.

But even without gods and devils, the world's more wonderous than any one of us could understand;
We all get to make a choice.

Some will choose to port lightweight games to Unity, and others will choose to complain about it.

...What a petty power life gave us, huh?

But don't let that mishandling distract you from the OG. MangaGamer's disasterous handling of the franchise was probably my first grievance against a company. Well, **Shuffle!** and **Da Capo** combined...

To this day, the **Shuffle!** experience is still incomplete for English readers. It's a real shame.

Even so, that young me played through **Shuffle!**, made the right choices, and got the ending he so desired. It was the Lisianthus route, all the way.



A CG from her route became the background image for my PSP, I named a song after her, and the figure sitting on my bedside table is, of course, Lisianthus.

That being said, **Shuffle!** isn't lacking in great designs. Even putting aside the iconic main heroine designs, side characters such as Mayumi, Kareha and Nadeshiko stand out as some of my all-time faves.

And let's not pretend Nerine's father Forbesii wouldn't make a good otome game character. Look at him!



Something I don't see praised enough about **Shuffle!** is the use of colour. From sprites to backgrounds, this is a colourful game, and it blends together beautifully.
When I see these kinds of tones, I'm happy.

Combine it with the blocky structuring of the characters' bodies and it's a style I can't help but love.

The script itself may be short, the writing... cheesy, but it worked incredibly well as a quick introduction to an industry of games.
Games that, unlike the majority, allowed you to carve your own path and prioritize your own interests.



And yet, while that experience was satisfying, it was only because someone else made decisions before me that I had fun

Someone translated this visual novel into an anime, and I disagreed with their translation.

One side isn't enough; they both need to exist.
Without that person's choices, I would've taken my own ability to make a choice for granted.

Like someone who's never been blind, the color blue is a fact of life; it's not special.
All I did was play a route in a mediocre adventure game.
That's how it would've felt...

THANKS FOR READING!

SOURCE PLEASE:

2 - Promo Page

Video thumbnails from the AnimEigo Youtube channel.

3 - Contents

Takase Rion & Shion from Kissing!! ~under the mistletoe~.
Kuze Kiriha from Fortune Arterial.
Deedlit from Comptiq 1994's Lodoss-tou Senki calendar.

5 to 8 - News

All sources available at c-pia.github.io

9 to 12 - What Are You Reading?

Screenshots and logo from Marica ~Shinjitsu no Sekai~.

13 to 16 - What Are You Reading?

Screenshots, logo and assets from Kissing ~under the mistletoe~.

19 to 22 - Something Special About...

Screenshots, logo and assets from Fortune Arterial.

23 to 26 - What's Over There!?

Logo from Lodoss-tou Senki (SNES).
Artwork from Deedlit in Wonder Labryinth.
Artwork from The Grey Witch novel.
Artwork from Comptiq 1994's Lodoss-tou Senki calendar.
Black & white images from Comptiq Magazine.
Screenshots from Lodoss-tou Senki (SNES).
Screenshot from Lodoss-tou Senki (PCE).
Screenshot from Deedlit in Wonder Labryinth.
Cover Art of Futari no Labyrinth.
Artwork from Lodoss no Hijiri Kishi (Uc).

27 & 28 - A Sepia Lens

Screenshots, logo and assets from Shuffle!.
Sofmap-exclusive Shuffle Essence+ goods from Navel's official website.

Kyacchi22

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We don't take cash donations, but if you'd like to donate words, we're always looking for contributions.

Without the work of other people, we'd have nothing to talk about in these pages, so I hope you don't mind if we dedicate a page to shouting out our sources.



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